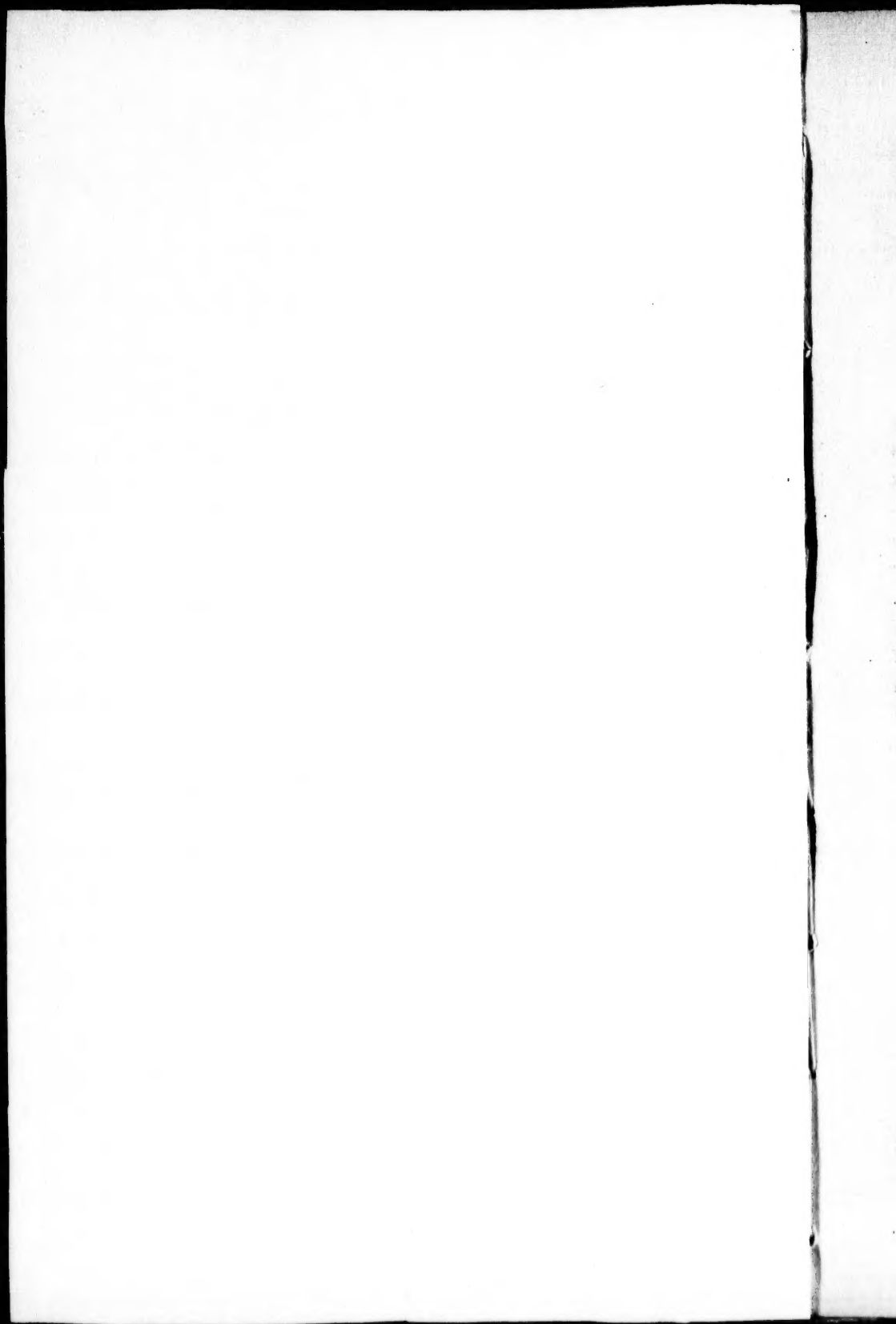




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THE

DIVINE LOVE,

AND THE

DIVINE FORGIVENESS,

ILLUSTRATED,

IN TWO SERMONS.

BY

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In presenting these and kindred sentiments to the public, I do not profess to impart views of Divine Truth which are peculiarly my own; but which have influenced some of the wisest and most intelligent minds in the Christian world, for the last half century. These sentiments are now, indeed, coming more prominently forward, as the intelligence of the age is able to receive and approve of them. Nor are they speculative, or based upon any mere human system of interpretation, but solely the result of a close study of the Word of God, in accordance with the letter of the word, and the spiritual sense thereof, as seen by comparing one part of the Scripture with other and similar passages. The doctrine taught is therefore *one*, and the tendency of it is to make all one, according to the prayer of Him whom we worship as God and Man in *One Person*.

THE DIVINE LOVE.

1st John, iv., part of 8th verse.—FOR GOD IS LOVE.

LOVE is that principle which can exist only by seeking to benefit and bless others. It is *diffusive* in its nature; and can find its happiness only in imparting happiness; and this happiness will be more or less extensively felt, in proportion to the nature and quality of the Love itself. In the natural man, this love is natural; in the spiritual or regenerated man, it becomes spiritual or Heavenly love in the soul; and in Heaven itself, it is angelic love, or that blessed principle of oneness, where *each* soul freely sympathizes with the happiness of *all the rest*.

But, these are only the *streams from the Infinite fountain*: these all *receive* according to their measure and capacity; and can impart only what they receive. But Love itself is boundless and eternal; and in the proper sense of the word, exists only in the bosom of God. It is there infinite and unwearied Love, and goes out of itself to the utmost bounds of the creation. God *hateth* nothing that he has made, and He willeth not the death of a sinner; *for God is Love*. If we can then ascertain what *is* Love, we shall be able to discern the *nature of God*.

Consider this Love on the lowest level of human life; as it exists in the heart of every being called *human*. The human heart is as wide as its *sympathies*, and these sympathies are as wide as the world; for the human heart loves *its own*, and its *sphere* reaches as far as home and kindred can be found.

When the child is recreant to parental love, still, in his waywardness, and in his errors, he is not neglected, nor cast off. Even when he abandons fond home, and spurns all the accents of endearing kindness, thoughts from home still follow him wherever he goes; blessings are wafted for him on the very winds; deep affections hover over him in his dreams; in the midnight storm, the heart starts for him in its sleep; and when the soft wind blows, the hopes of his return come over the spirit like gentle messengers from a distant land.

And when he comes to himself; oh! when the illusion is scattered, when the spell is dissolved; when his wandering feet slowly seek his native home—is there no *love* for him there? Are there no yearning hearts to welcome him to the blest abode of his childhood, where he once lived full of dreams and hopes; and where every visible thing is covered all over with the golden hues of memory? Say, are there no trembling hearts that have counted the years of his absence; and are not their feelings too full for utterance? Words are wanting to express even this human love, and the outburst of the *heart* puts all human language to flight.

If this be the sphere of mere natural love, of that love which is instinctive in all who claim to be human; how wide and diffusive is the sphere of spiritual love, of that love which extends into eternity, and yearns for the best interests of the *immortal* part of man! *This* is the love felt, by the regenerated man, for his friends and kindred; nay, even for his enemies and persecutors! *His* love cannot be limited to earth, for the *sphere* of his affections extends into Heaven, and partakes of the sympathies and affections of that bright world. All earthly things and earthly uses he regards as the means of higher influences; and he fills them all with heavenly life and feelings. His sphere extends through this world, and into the next too; and he looks upon the human family as one vast brotherhood, to be benefitted and blessed both here and hereafter! The wider this feeling of spiritual love, the more diffusive is his own happiness, till he feels the answering response from Heaven, and hears, as it were, the breathing of heavenly accents,—*Freely ye have received, freely give: it is more blessed to give than to receive. There is joy in Heaven over every sinner that repenteth.*

It is reserved for the *next* world, to see the full exercise of this blessed principle, to know what it is to *hear* the response of angelic voices, and to *see and feel* the kindling love of angelic faces! Think of a society where the happiness of each is the happiness of all, and where all conspire to the happiness of each; where each of these societies is only the member of a larger circle; and this larger circle is only one among others that fill the boundless realms of Heaven! *The happiness there*, you see, is in proportion to the *love*; to the diffusiveness of the Heavenly principle; to the wide-spread benevolence that reigns in that blessed world.

Such is spiritual love as it exists dimly upon earth, and as it is fully realized in Heaven; till it kindles up in the fire of the seraph, and glows and burns in the face of the Archangel! *He can-*

not be satisfied, except with the widest and most diffusive *love*; his *sphere* extends from circle to circle of the Heavenly societies; he imbibes more vividly than others the spirit of Heavenly love, and sees therefore deeper into the plans of Heavenly wisdom.

But *this* love, after all, is *finite*; and though continually increasing for ever, it will for ever remain finite! Between it and the infinite, the distance will ever be infinite. What then must be the Infinite love—the love of God? It is exhaustless, unwearied, and eternal love; utterly incomprehensible to the finite mind; it is the *name* of God Himself—for *God is Love*!

To conceive of this *love*, even remotely, we must consider it under the *emblem* by which it is represented to us in the Holy Scriptures,—that of the visible and material Sun. This earth, as we learn from science, was born of the Sun, was created in the order of Providence, by means of emanations from that source; and all the dwellers on the earth are kept alive by the light and heat which now proceed from that fountain of life! The rays of the sun are ever streaming forth to benefit and bless all who dwell upon earth; and it warms and blesses each, as if each were the only dweller upon the earth's surface! It is untiring too in its genial exercise, and new every morning! Nothing can *restrain* its influence, for it is created to shine upon all, even *upon the evil and the unthankful*.

Here is an emblem of the *love of God*—FOR GOD IS LOVE. God is the *Sun* of the Moral World. He shines upon all with the blessed light and warmth of His Divine Providence. In all ages has He saved the souls of men; and yet His mercy is as free, and His bounty as exhaustless, as if no one had yet been blessed by His cheering Love. Innumerable multitudes have been ransomed from sin and sorrow, and the means are at hand for multitudes more! Heaven has already received its myriads from earth; the saints of all ages have gone to their home; and yet the love of God seems wider and wider than ever! There is no limit to His mercy; and no bounds to His *Love*.

But, it may be asked—and is, indeed, often asked,—if the love of God is thus infinite, why are any of His creatures unhappy? whence come the misery and disquietude on earth? nay, whence are the torments of Hell?

Now, it is usual to meet this objection by a reference to what is termed the *justice* of God. But still the question arises, how is it possible that even the *justice* of God should consign men to *everlasting* torments?

We meet this question on very different grounds. We do not talk merely of the *justice* of God in the punishment of the sinner; but of the *love* of God too. The *justice* of God is *pure love*, and nothing else, for there is nothing arbitrary or vindictive in the character of God. God is *Love*, infinite and unwearied love; and all the misery of the wicked arises from having *rejected and despised this Love!* This *love* is felt by them to be the consuming wrath of God; for it comes to *them* only in the shape of coercion and restraint upon their selfish and malignant passions; and this *resistance* to God's will kindles up in them the flames of Hell!

No one can think of God except from such principles as exist in *his own mind*. To such as love God, and seek to obey His will, God is love; but to the evil He is thought to be an enemy and an avenger. The good, indeed, tremble, but tremble with holy fear, with such fear as love contains; but the evil are terrified and affrighted, and call upon the mountains to fall upon them. It is not possible for an evil man to see God, except as a consuming fire. It is the *pure in heart* only that *see God* as He is.

God is one and ever the same; but he is differently manifested according to the medium through which he is seen, just as the rays of light, when they fall upon some objects, produce deformed and ugly colours, and upon other objects produce bright and beautiful colours. The *light* is the same, and from the same source; but the *objects* upon which the light falls are totally different. So, in the *life* of plants, some are healthful, and some are poisonous; some sustain the life of man, and some destroy it. And yet they are all equally fed and nourished by the light and heat of the *same sun!* So also in the lower animals: the same sun which warms the *gentle dove* warms also the *hissing serpent*; and the *lamb* rejoices in the same vital heat that nourishes the beasts of prey!

These objects in the natural world are not there on their own account; but they *are* there to teach man the difference between receiving the *Love* of God without perversion, as it was *originally given*, and the perversion of that love. These perversions in natural objects are, in one sense, involuntary, and in the lower animals they imply no guilt for *that* reason; but, in man they are voluntary, and are therefore the measure of his real depravity. *Originally* these perversions were not *there at all*. There was no evil will or evil purpose in man, and there was then nothing in nature but what was very good. There was nothing ugly or deformed there; there were no thorns nor thistles, no poisons, no *hissing serpent*, no beasts of prey;

these are the *effects of sin*; they were originated by man himself; they are the perversions in the natural world, to *correspond* to the perversions in the moral world; they are only the *signs and symbols* of the depravity and degradation of man!

But, if God is a God of Love, how came man *to be* depraved and degraded; why was he ever *allowed* to fall into his present condition? Man was created *free* to choose or reject; and without this freedom, he could not have been *human*. Are any persons present willing to surrender this *freedom*, and to become mere machines, to be pulled about with a string? No! no rational being is willing to surrender the exercise of his faculties, and to become a mere automaton. There is nothing for which *human* beings contend with *greater* energy than for *freedom*—the freedom to will and do—the freedom to choose and reject. Freedom was the first, and the great gift of God to man; and that gift has never been recalled! This is that gift, without which nothing else *could* possibly be given to man; and it *was* given, because *God is Love*, and delights in the free and *willing* homage of His creatures!

The *Love* of God is a very different attribute from what we *naturally* suppose it to be. It is not, like the love of man, liable to any *error* in its manifestation; but it is regulated and controlled by a *wisdom* that is infinite. God is unchangeable. He cannot deny Himself; and his Love goes forth to benefit and bless His creatures in accordance with the laws of His own Being, and not *otherwise*! God is surrounded by certain *laws*; and He cannot *go out* of them, for they are Himself! and these laws *rule* in the wide universe, whether obeyed or disobeyed: they *rule*, of themselves, without any *special* exercise of the Divine power; they carry *their own* sentence into execution, by an inherent and self-acting force; it is Heaven to obey them, and Hell to disobey them. In *this* sense, God is everywhere; and if you go up to Heaven, God is there; and if you go down to Hell, God is there also.

And this is *Love*! The mercy of God is shewn, not in *passing by* the demands of His own Laws, but in bringing the sinner into *subjection* to these Laws. *Mercy* is not a change in God, but a change in man; and the *Love* of God to the sinner is shown, not in the mere *pardon of sin*, but in *deliverance* from it! An act of *immediate* mercy, as *men* deem mercy, is utterly impossible on the part of God; for if the *mercy* of God could save man, without reference to the condition of man himself, all men would necessarily *be* saved; for God is infinitely merciful, and *willeth* not the death of a sinner.

His *will* is to save all men ; but all men are not *willing* to be saved ! They are not willing to submit to those laws, by which God is surrounded ; and *God* cannot *go out* of those laws, without denying Himself !

You see *this* exemplified in the laws of the *natural* world, for *these* Laws are the laws of God, as much as the laws of the moral world are. He who wrote the Book of Nature, wrote also the Book of Revelation. They are *both* indeed equally the *Revelations* of God ; and Love, and Love only, is inscribed on all their pages !

For instance : it is a *Law*, of the moral world, that light is light, and that it is *not* darkness ; and it is equally a law that good is good, and that it is *not* evil. Now these are the laws of God ; and for God to *change* these Laws would be to *deny* Himself ! If God were to put darkness for light, and light for darkness ; evil for good, and good for evil, there would be an end to His *Love* ; and this *would* be the case, if he were to save a sinner by an act of *immediate* mercy, without reference to the change in the habits and the dispositions of the sinner ! If such a sinner were to be taken to Heaven, he would mar the very happiness of that bright world ; and his own torments would be a thousandfold greater there, than they could be in the deepest and darkest Hell ! It would be an arbitrary act on the part of God ; it would be the denial of Himself, and the violation of all His Laws.

God never departs from these Laws, even in the *natural* world. It is a law, *there*, for instance, that fire should burn, and that ice should chill or freeze the body ; and there is no exemption from this law ; but the *Love* of God is shown in giving the body *sensibility* to heat and cold, by which the danger of being burned or frozen may be avoided ! These instincts are perfect, in adaptation to these laws ; and without this deep sensibility to pain, the body would be continually liable to *perish*, either from heat or cold.

By these laws, which are the laws of *Love*, and therefore the laws of God, man is the arbiter of his own destiny. He may do good, or he may do evil ! He may go to Heaven, or he may go to Hell ! But, in either case, it is the life of his *choice*. In the one case, he receives the Love of God into his will, and yields a ready assent to His Laws ; in the other case, he resists the Laws of Divine order ; *he puts evil for good, and good for evil ; darkness for light, and light for darkness*. If a man die in this *latter* state, nothing can save him ; he has blotted the word "mercy" out of the Universe ; and he can never hear *that* word any more !

But he has not blotted the *Love* of God out of the Universe; the Love of God remains unchangeable, though it comes to the sinner only in the form of wrath and anguish! He may charge *God* with his punishment, and even think that God, if he chose, might deliver him from it; but, *this* is merely the blindness and infatuation of sin that shuts his eyes from seeing the *Love* of God that is putting a restraint upon his sinful passions! *If you go down to Hell, God is there; His Love is there* in governing and quelling the rage of Devils against each other, and in leading them from the more grievous, to the lighter degrees of punishment. The wrath is not in God, but in *them*; they have *perverted* His Love, and thus changed it into its opposite, till they can no longer *see Him as He is*, but only as a Being of wrath and anger.

These views of the Divine Being, as a Being of *Love*, are clearly seen in all His dispensations. Is He not *kind* to the evil and the unthankful? Does He not *send His rain upon the just and the unjust*? Is not life a continued succession of blessings; and does He not crown man with mercies and loving kindnesses? Every thing is so arranged, in the *orderly* course of His Providence, as to give pleasure instead of pain; and pain itself, when this order is violated, is the *merciful* arrangement to prevent a greater and more alarming evil! And is it even *possible*, that a Being who so *loves* His creatures to-day, that *He*—an *unchangeable* Being—can *hate* them to-morrow? No; it is not even possible! “God willeth not the death of a sinner; and hateth nothing that He has made.” Men choose their own lot, for good or evil, and if they prefer evil here, they will continue to prefer it hereafter. The condemnation thus becomes a present condemnation; *this is the condemnation that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* It is a law of their being to do what they *love* to do; and the love of evil is the essential element of all misery, because it opposes the love of God.

From these reflections on the *Love of God*, we see the awful depravity and degradation of *resisting* that love; of spurning the offers of salvation; and remaining the willing enemies of Him, who seeks to save the lost. Only think of that Love—of the infinite, unwearied, and eternal Love of God;—a love, so vast, that no finite Being shall ever be able to comprehend it; shall ever know its height and length, and depth and breadth, throughout everlasting ages!

To see this love in its highest influence, we must see it, as it is manifested in *person*. We may dwell upon the love of God, as it exists in

the Infinite Fountain of the Deity, for ever inconceivable to all created Beings ; and we may think of it, also, as it descended before the incarnation, in the *form of an Angel*, to come to the knowledge and perception of *Angels* ; but, to feel its power, and to be warmed by its holy fire, we must see God *manifested in the person of Jesus Christ*. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*. Are you a sinner ? Then you are the *object* of His Love ; to you the Gospel is addressed ; it is good news and glad tidings to the sinner : *Come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*. And *him that cometh unto me, I will, in no wise, cast out*.

But, *how* are we to come ? Come as they came of old : follow Him, in the path He trode. Be His disciples indeed, and not in word only. It is the heart service he requires ; and not the mere homage of the lips. It is not the mere opinions, not the act of the mind alone, that can enable you to come to Jesus ! An intelligent belief is indeed essential ; it is quite necessary to know that Jesus is the Saviour ; that He is the Lord ; and the only Saviour and Redeemer of lost man. But, the thing actually required, is the belief in Him with the *heart*. There must be a feeling sense of His Power, and of His Love ; a consciousness that He is not only able, but willing to save ; nay, that He is not only *willing* to save, but that He *loves* to save. He is *Jesus*, the Saviour ; He is the Infinite *love* of God, in the *human* person.

You can come to *Him* ; but, you can come to God in no other way. There is no *other* manifestation of the absolute Deity ; of the incomprehensible Father ! *No man cometh unto the Father*, He says, *but by me*. *No one hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him*. In this way, men may approach God ; but, in no other way, can He be approached by men or Angels.

But, how can we come, even to the Saviour ? He is in Heaven, and we are upon earth. They of old came to Him *in person* ; they were conscious of His presence, and relied on His power ; and they left all and followed Him. So may *you* be conscious of His presence, in a higher sense, than *they* ever were ! *They* had doubts ; you need have none. He is no longer neglected and despised on earth ; nor hanging on the cross ; nor laid in the Tomb, where *their* hopes, for the time, were laid ; but, He is risen from the dead ; He has ascended into Heaven ; and all power is given to Him as the Redeemer of sinners. He is the medium of access with the Invisible God ; the *visi-*

the form in which God resides ; the Divine Human Person, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily !

Herein is love ; the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge ! He puts on the nature of man, and is touched with the feeling of all our infirmities ; rises with it to the regions of glory, and dwells there as the Lord of all, in the glorified Person of Jesus Christ. And in *that* Person, He is now present everywhere—omnipresent, nay, omniscient and omnipotent ! He is present by His spirit ; present in His word ; giving life and efficiency to His promises ; and calling all men to come to Him for salvation. All things are ready ; the feast is prepared ; let none go away empty, hungering and thirsting for immortal food.

The command is,—*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.* It is a Gospel of love ; there is *Love* in all its Holy precepts ; the blessed *lesson* on all its leaves is *love* ; love to God and man, the only constraining principle in Heaven above, and on earth beneath, which binds His disciples together, in one vast brotherhood of love and peace !

What glad tidings and good news is this : *God is Love !* There is room in His boundless compassion to satisfy the cravings of the immortal soul ; there is room for *you* in His Kingdom, infinite room, scope enough for all your faculties throughout Eternity. There is room for all that come ; and none that come shall be cast out ; no humble effort shall be despised, and no sincere prayer shall be rejected. There is no impediment in the way ; there is no obstacle to those who will come ! Compel them to come in is the language of the commission ; preach the Gospel in its fullest and freest terms of mercy ; impart its Heavenly consolations, and apply its blessed precepts, to all who are willing to receive them. To all such the gates of Heaven are now wide open ; for all these there is room—there is room, and yet—*there is room.*

THE DIVINE FORGIVENESS.

*Psalm cxxx. 4—BUT, THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH THEE, THAT THOU
MAYEST BE FEARED.*

WE have considered the Love of God, generally, in its abstract nature, in the preceding discourse; and we now proceed to consider it more particularly in its manifestations. This Love is ever going forth, in ceaseless activity, to benefit and bless; and it must, therefore, have objects on which to bestow its care. In this world, its objects are sinners; and with reference to them, God's Love is called *forgiveness*, and it thus becomes adapted to the case of those who are still in a state of opposition to His Laws, *there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.*

We have seen that the character of God is that of Love; that Love is the very essence of His nature; and that this Love is, necessarily, Infinite!

We have seen, also, that this Love is full of wisdom; that it is not an unmeaning attribute; but that it is regulated and controlled by a knowledge that cannot err. Hence this Love is directed towards the happiness of all God's creatures.

We have seen, also, that though God is all love, and that Love, guided by infinite wisdom, yet that all His creatures are not made happy; there is evidently much misery in this world, and there is a world beyond the grave, where misery reigns supreme.

We have seen, further, that this state of things is not only consistent with the Divine Love, but that it is the necessary *consequence* of that Love. If there were no Laws of God which made the wicked miserable, and made the good happy, there could be neither justice nor mercy in God. If sin did not entail its own punishment, the Laws of God would not be able to vindicate themselves; and then He would cease to be a God of Love, for all His Laws are the Laws of Love. These Laws denounce all sin, and declare an eternal separation between God and the impenitent sinner.

Here, then, opens upon us in full view the nature of God's forgiveness, *i. e.*, the mercy of God to be penitent; *there is forgiveness with*

Thee, that Thou mayest be feared ; and this forgiveness is extended to man over the whole length and breadth of his probationary existence. God's *love* to man existed not only before man sinned, but after he had sinned. It is not because man *has* sinned that the Love of God has allowed him to sin on ; nay, his very sins rendered him a more distinct object of this Love. The Love that created man came forth in due time also to redeem him ; it came to seek and to save him when lost ; and it was manifested to the sinner as it could *not* have been manifested to him before he sinned. This Love is shewn in its *forgiving* nature ; and if you would know what forgiveness is, you must feel it under an humbling sense of your utter unworthiness in the sight of God, and of a native hostility to his Laws. A deep contrition for sin, under these circumstances, ensures the forgiveness of sin ; and herein is its power to redeem the sinner. There is a power in the forgiveness of sin which destroys sin : it is the sense of God's deep Love touching the soul that begets love in return. *We love Him because He first loved us.*

Here, too, the *ground* of forgiveness is seen ; forgiveness springs from the Infinite Love of God, and can be realized only in the way of true obedience to His will. This forgiveness is absolute ; it is free ; it claims no compensation for the past ; it asks only the future and willing homage of the heart. This is the end and design of all forgiveness ; and hence *repentance* is the only ground of pardon ; *there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared*,—that is, that Thou mayest be loved and obeyed.

This great truth is prominent in every part of the Old Testament. In the xviii of Ezekiel, it is declared from the beginning to the end : *when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.* In Joel : *Rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, long suffering and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil.* In Daniel : *To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness though we have rebelled against Him, neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God to walk in the paths which He set before us.* In the Psalms : *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.* And so on, throughout the old Testament.

The same great truth is taught in the New Testament, by the Lord in Person. He says, forgive as ye hope to be forgiven ; forgive your Brother, on repentance, seven times a day, nay, seventy times seven. The same is taught in the Parable of the talents,—the Lord

forgiving the ten thousand talents, because man had nothing to pay with, and enforcing forgiveness by man of the hundred pence on this very principle. The Prodigal Son is another instance of Divine forgiveness. Be merciful is the great lesson. *Be merciful, as your Father in Heaven is merciful, for he is kind to the evil and the unthankful. If Thou shouldest be extreme to mark what is done amiss O Lord, who may abide it? But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.*

The ground of this forgiveness, I repeat it, is the infinite mercy of God; and the design of it is to restore man to His favour. All is forgiven and forgotten upon repentance. "It is His nature and property always to have mercy and to forgive." God is a kind Parent, and His Love consists in making his children happy; and if they depart from Him, His Love requires not their punishment, but their return. They are miserable when they depart from Him, and He follows them down to their lost estate. His very justice, too, as well as His mercy, is concerned in saving them—if they are willing to be saved. Suppose your child rebels against your authority, and incurs your displeasure? Is there no *compassion* felt for his sufferings? Do you not seek to win him back to obedience? And what do you call this feeling on your part? Is it mercy or compassion only, or is it simple justice to the child, to recall him, if possible, from his wanderings? And is man *more* just, or merciful, than God? It is, therefore, justice, as well as mercy in God, to forgive sins upon repentance. *Here mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and grace kiss each other.*

We have so long obscured this great truth, that it is difficult now to place it in simple day-light. God has been so long clothed with vindictive passions, that we are accustomed to think of Him as arbitrary and severe; nay, to consider Him *less* merciful than He teaches us to be.

For instance: The Lord requires us to forgive others who have offended us; not to impute sins to them, if they are penitent; not any longer to charge them with the guilt of sins, which they no longer commit; to be merciful unto them and to love them, though they have violated the Laws of Love; to be willing and ready to forgive and forget, when they are willing to change their conduct. This is the teaching of the Gospel as regards forgiveness by man; and we all recognize *this* teaching as the Truth of the Gospel in his case. But, we place limitations on the mercy of the Almighty; we say that he cannot forgive sins on mere repentance; we declare that

His *justice* must be satisfied before He can shew *mercy* ; and that the whole debt must be *paid* before the debt can be forgiven ! There is no mercy at all in this ; there is no forgiveness in the case ; the truth of the text is wholly denied—*there is (no) forgiveness with God that He may be feared.*

How came such a denial ever to prevail among men ? How came they to deny the Divine forgiveness, when it is so clearly and unequivocally expressed in Holy Scripture ? They denied it, in virtue of their character as *fallen* beings. In this character, they considered that God would demand satisfaction for their sins, as they demanded satisfaction for the offences of others against them. And they were allowed to consider this as the real character of God, being in the lowest natural state themselves, and incapable of being governed by any higher Law. Hence under the Jewish dispensation they were taught to *demand* satisfaction from each other for all injuries and wrongs done to them ; *eye for eye, tooth for tooth, stripe for stripe, blood for blood. Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.* They were thus taught, and could be taught in no other way, that God would demand full satisfaction for their offences against Him. They considered God such an one as themselves, and He dealt with them accordingly. On this principle there was *no* forgiveness with God, and no mercy could be shown to the offender till full *satisfaction* had been made for the sins committed. Hence, they considered sacrifices as *vicarious*, that is, that the victim offered actually stood in the place of the offender, and they were allowed to have this view of animal sacrifices, as they were also allowed, and were commanded, to *retaliate* for injuries done to them ; while, in both cases, the end and design of the Law was *higher*, as is clearly illustrated in the Gospel : (Matt. v, 43, 44, and Mark xii, 33.) The real end and design of sacrifices was representative, and not vicarious, in the usual sense of the word.

The natural man having embraced this doctrine, must, of course, ground it on Holy Scripture ; and there is one passage chiefly on which the system rests, or which, at least, *involves* the whole doctrine,—*God will by no means clear the guilty.* This, and kindred passages of Scripture, are construed by the natural man to mean that there is no forgiveness with God, without a *substitute* for sins. Now, the passage proves anything else but the necessity of a substitute for sins. The passage reads thus :—*And the Lord passed by before him (before Moses) and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abun-*

dant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.

Here the Divine forgiveness is declared, in the most unqualified manner, to the penitent,—*forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin*; but no forgiveness to the impenitent,—*the Lord will by no means clear the guilty*. If it is here meant that there is no *pardon* for the guilty, on repentance, man must perish; for he *is* guilty; and if it meant that the guilty is forgiven for the *sake* of a victim, or substitute, this *does* clear the guilty.

I read no where in the Gospel that the Lord demanded satisfaction for past sins, in order to their forgiveness by Himself. The only condition there stated is to forsake sins, and they are at once forgiven by an act of the Divine Sovereignty,—*thy sins be forgiven thee*. Here is an absolute and unqualified pardon for the past. That sins are forgiven upon repentance is the uniform doctrine taught by the Lord Himself in Person; and he gave *this* doctrine in command to His ministers for all future time,—*that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, throughout all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*.

Still it is continually affirmed that there is no forgiveness of sins without a substitute for sins. But, how could a substitute ever be found? Why, upon the supposition that there are three Gods instead of one! One is thus made to atone to another, for the sins committed equally against both! But how could one Divine Being suffer to appease another? If there are three different Persons, or Beings, and all *equal*, how could one go out of Himself to become a substitute to the others for the sins of man? How could the Son do an act which the Father could not do? If one could not forgive sins without a substitute, how could the others?

In the very nature of the case, no substitute for sins can ever be found. God cannot *undo* the sins of man by suffering the penalty of sin. God cannot suffer; and nothing finite is sufficient to atone to the Infinite. No one would venture to say that the Divine nature died on the cross for sin; and if it were not the Divine nature, the satisfaction spoken of could not be made. If it is said, that though the Lord could not suffer, yet the Human nature of the Lord could, it may be replied that the Human nature which suffered *death* was finite; and if the highest angel, as has been often affirmed, could not suffer or atone for the sins of man, how could *that* nature which was made *lower* than the angels, for the *suffering of death*? My

Brethren, justice and mercy are in accordance with, and are not in opposition to, each other. They are *kindred* attributes in the God-head; and appear differently according to the different states of man. Mercy or Love is the soul of forgiveness; and justice is the form of its manifestation to sinners. Hence man cannot be forgiven until he is in a state to *receive* forgiveness. Now, an evil man is not in a state to receive this forgiveness (though it is continually urged upon him by the Divine Being), because an evil man is not able to comprehend either the mercy or the justice of God.

Apply it, and you will see the truth at once. A kind parent loves his child, though the child is evil; but, till the child cease from evil, he cannot receive the kind parent's love. The parent feels nothing but mercy and forgiveness, but the child cannot receive them as such. He cannot feel this love till he is touched with sorrow for his disobedience to his father's will. Then he feels that love and justice are kindred qualities, and that the just restraints put upon him, by parental authority are the simple evidences of Love; and that they were designed not to punish him, but to induce him to return to his obedience. Merely to forgive the child, while he remained impenitent, would do him no good; indeed, "forgiveness," in such a case, is a moral impossibility! Forgiveness always exists in a kind parent's heart; but the child is not able to receive it while in a state of opposition to his father's will. The change required is not in the parent, but in the child.

So, while men remain impenitent, they cannot receive the Divine forgiveness. God always loves them, but they cannot feel His Love; nay, His very love is considered unmerciful, because it will not encourage them in sin. His Love requires not the punishment, but the return of the sinner; it requires the re-establishment of the Law in his heart; and hence it becomes *strict justice*, on the part of God, to forgive the sinner on repentance. This is the nature of the Divine forgiveness: *there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared*. But the sinner, in his natural state, considers God's forgiveness merely as giving up the demands of the Law instead of rectifying the disorders which lead to the violation of it. He considers justice and mercy naturally at war with each other, so long as he remains in this natural state of mind. But, when he begins to feel the *Love* of God, and is touched with a sense of the *forgiving* nature of that Love, he feels that justice and mercy are one; that the Divine forgiveness is not a change in God, but in man; that God always forgives, but that man is not always in a state to receive this forgiveness.

Man is a wanderer from his Father's house; and God is the kind parent waiting for man's return. And is God not at liberty to act the part of a kind parent? Can He not receive the returning penitent till an innocent person suffers for the guilty? Till some one else is punished, is there no pardon for the Prodigal son? Is man *more* merciful than God? Will it never do for God to *forgive* the debt, till the debt itself has been paid? Why the debt never can be paid in the least degree! A sin, once committed, *is* committed, and cannot be undone for ever; and no satisfaction for it, is even possible. God cannot suffer for it, and no one else can atone for it; but God can *forgive* sins, and He has continually declared His willingness to do so, and the end and design of His forgiveness is to recall His wandering children,—*let them return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon them; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

If man cannot be forgiven until a full satisfaction has been made for violating the Law of God, then he never can be forgiven; for it is a part of *that* Law that the *innocent* cannot suffer any more than that the guilty can escape. In the meantime, the maker of the law cannot endure the penalty; for that would be to change the very law itself. He who sins, he alone can endure the penalty—*the soul that sinneth it shall die*; this death is a *present* death, and if he sin on through life, he will love to sin for ever, and thus render the death an everlasting death, *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

Let us now calmly reconsider this subject, in order to meet some of the *objections* which men raise to these views of the Divine forgiveness.*

It is objected, in the first place, to the power of God to forgive sins absolutely, that He has declared eternal death against the sinner; and that all must, therefore, die, unless satisfaction is made to Divine Justice. We have seen that this satisfaction is, in the very nature of the case, quite impossible; and therefore, if the *threat* of eternal death has been made by the Almighty, all must die; and the enquiry very naturally arises,—whether such a threat has ever been made. The leading passage of scripture referred to, by way of enforcing this doctrine is: *in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*—Gen. ii. 17. Now it is very certain that *this* sentence has passed upon all men, for all have sinned; but is the death, here spoken of,

* These "objections," and the answers thereto, are taken, generally, from an article on the Atonement, in a late periodical.

necessarily *eternal* death? On the contrary, are we not told that if men return from their evil ways, they shall not die eternally; that the soul that sinneth it shall die; that he who lives on in sin shall die, but *if the wicked turn from all his sins he shall surely live; he shall not die, but shall save his soul alive.* Why will ye die, O House of Israel, for I have no pleasure, saith the Lord, in the death of him that dieth. There is no threat of eternal death in these passages, nor is there any warrant for such a threat to the *penitent*, in the Holy Scriptures. See Ezekiel xxxiii. 14, 15, 16, where this very expression—*he shall surely die*, occurs; where it is emphatically declared that if he repent, he shall not die, *he shall surely live.* So also in the same Prophet, iii. 18, 19.

Besides, how could a *threat* ever proceed from God?—what could be the object of the Divine threatening, as declared to exist in Genesis ii., before alluded to? It would have been a threat to innocent beings. Would you threaten an innocent child by way of keeping him in obedience? And are not virtuous beings conscious, without a threat, that sin is offensive to the Holy One? How could a threat be urged as a motive to retain them in a state of innocence? Or, was it to produce fear! Fear is addressed only to fallen beings, and even then, fear is merely the beginning of wisdom; perfect love casteth out fear, because all fear hath torment. Love is the only constraining motive of virtuous obedience; and if love were too weak a motive for such obedience, a threat would never succeed. It would produce only a feeling of alarm and inquietude.

It was therefore not a threat at all. It was simply a declaration, as we gather from other places in the Holy Scripture, and especially in those just referred to in Ezekiel. The declaration of the Almighty was,—*that the soul that sinneth shall die*; it was the principle of the Divine Government, and it declared the nature of all opposition to His will. Such a feeling of opposition would entail its own misery, and bring the soul into a state of condemnation. The expression of *death* in the above passage is just equivalent to the expression of condemnation, or damnation. *This is the damnation* (for the word is so translated in other parts of the Gospel), *that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* The threat, so called, is here executed; the sentence has *already* passed; the death, or condemnation, has already taken place; this is the condemnation; and yet this death is not eternal! the sinner is still called upon to return and live; *he that forsaketh his sins shall find mercy; there is forgiveness with Thee, that*

Thou mayest be feared ; the soul that sinneth, it shall die ; and the soul that sinneth does die, and no one can die for it. There is no possibility of escape ; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him : the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Again, it is objected to the power of God to forgive sins out of His own sovereignty, without satisfaction being made to His injured justice, that others would continue to sin on with the hope of pardon at last.

How does this objection operate ? If men are not to be forgiven on repentance, because others will sin on, the Father could not receive the returning Prodigal. The Father must demand *satisfaction* for the past, before he could exercise forgiveness towards his son ! Upon this principle, the Christian could not forgive others, as he prays God to forgive him ; nor could any encouragement be offered to continue in a life of progressive holiness. *If Thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss (shouldst mark iniquities), O Lord, who shall stand ? But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.*

It has been even objected against the power of God to *forgive* sins ; that the good of the Universe demands that the *justice* of God should be vindicated by a full satisfaction for the sins of man, lest *other* worlds, now innocent, should sin too !

What an *objection* for a finite creature to propose,—the good of the *universe* demands it ! But how does this objection operate ; how does the case stand with regard to *other* parts of the Universe ? It stands thus :

If satisfaction has been made for *one* world, why not for the others ? If God is just, they would say, he will extend the *vicarious* sacrifice throughout the Universe. The satisfaction is infinite ; and there is therefore enough in it to atone for all sins ! Why, the effect would be to encourage Beings to sin, rather than to hinder them. They would plead the example of one world already fallen, and claim the same immunities. Nor could the *justice* of God, upon this *principle* as here objected, refuse the claim ! Such are the contradictions into which men have fallen, in order to vindicate what *they* call the justice of God ! Such are their " objections " to His government.

The truth is, that men talk a great deal about the injured justice of God, and the good of the *Universe*, and they care nothing about the one or the other. They contend for what they *call* the justice of God, while they are often destitute themselves of the most simple jus-

tice towards their fellow creatures! With the justice of God, *they* have nothing to do in the way of *protecting* it; for, it will always protect itself. On the same principle, why not protect the laws of *nature* from injury? They are God's laws; they are the laws of Infinite justice; and they are continually injured or violated in the way of infraction; but they always vindicate themselves, and require no other satisfaction for the injury or violation. The injured justice of God! Why, it never *can* be injured, for, if it could be injured, it would cease to be Infinite Justice! Violate one of these laws, and see if there is any other satisfaction required than suffering the penalty? Put your hand into the fire, and see whether you have injured the infinite justice of God, or injured yourself. It is precisely the same in the moral world; and if you violate these laws, the consequences are just as inevitable as when you violate the laws of nature. The difference is in the extent of punishment. Nature is confined to this world; but the moral laws are eternal in their sanctions, and if men live and die in a sinful state, they will feel the consequences for ever! Sin on through this life, and you carry the *results* into eternity with you; the evil purposes of the heart, whether open or secret here, will *there* lead to endless misery and disquietude. Become regenerated in this world, and all that is high, and holy, and heavenly, awaits you in the world to come!

If such, then, be the doctrine of the Divine forgiveness; if it is an act of mercy alone, and has no reference to any satisfaction for the past,—why was it necessary for Christ to suffer? And what was the object of His coming into the world? He came to *redeem* man, to deliver him from a state of thralldom and servitude, as is continually and emphatically declared throughout the Holy Prophets. Man was in bondage; in prison, chains, and darkness; subject to the power of enemies he could not subdue: these powers had gained the ascendancy, and Christ came to destroy them. *He was manifested*, we are told by the apostle, *that He might destroy the works of the Devil*. He assumed the Human nature to subdue the powers of evil in that nature over which they had once triumphed; to glorify it, by admitting into that nature temptations and combats from the powers of darkness; and thus, by vanquishing those powers for ever, to become the *perpetual* human medium of saving influences to mankind. He came to remove no obstacles to the forgiveness of sin, because no such obstacles ever existed; and when He came he forgave sins, as He always *had* forgiven them, and does *now*! There was nothing said about satisfaction for the past, in order to be forgiven. On the

contrary, they were told to forgive sins to *others* as God forgave *their own* sins ; that is, without taking vengeance or demanding satisfaction. And hence they could realize the nature of the *Divine* forgiveness.

The Divine forgiveness is not merely passing by the demands of the law ; but it involves deliverance from the actual dominion of sin in the heart. It is represented, in the Gospel, by a deliverance from bodily evils ; and it was therefore usual when miracles were performed with that view, to say,—*thy sins be forgiven thee*. The bodily cure and the forgiveness of sins were terms of the same import : *Whether is easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, arise, take up thy bed and walk ?* The natural, in these cases, represents the spiritual ; and in this sense the Lord is ever present to *take away the sins of the world*. He is merciful to all men, and seeks to withdraw them from everything that is evil and false (so far as in *freedom* they can be drawn), and to impart to them all that is good and true. In this sense, He continually *casts out the Devils with His word, and heals all that are spiritually sick*. He forgives sins, not in paying the penalty of these sins to *another* Being ; but in delivering men from the bondage of sin, by destroying the power of the Devil who is the author of sin. Hence, we may ask, emphatically, *who can forgive sins but God only ?* And here arises the great question—*who is God ?* We read of God as creating all things ; as exhibiting signs and wonders ; as working miracles ; as delivering His Law amid thunderings and lightnings ; as speaking by His Prophets ; as proclaiming His own advent ; and as declaring that He Himself would appear in the flesh ! We read again, that He appeared, and that He declared Himself to be the Self-Existent, the I AM. In a word, we read that the Deity spake in human accents, and was seen and heard in this natural world, in which we live, and which He had originally created !

God is therefore *known*, and is a distinct object of worship to christian minds ; and all the obscurity on the doctrine of the Divine forgiveness, and on every other doctrine in the Bible, arises from denying the actual fact of the coming of the Jehovah into this world ! It was declared that He *should* come, but it is practically denied that He *has* come. It is denied, I mean, that He who forgave sins on earth, is the very Jehovah against whom sins have been committed ! And, yet, how is it possible that any *other* Being can forgive sins ? Who can forgive sins but God only ? Well might the Jews ask such a question ; and well may *we* enquire the meaning of it.

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Who can forgive sins but God only ? *There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.* On this ground alone can we acknowledge the Deity of Jesus Christ ; or pay unto Him the honour due unto His name. He declares emphatically that He is the Lord, the only manifestation of the Jehovah ; that the Father dwells in Him ; that the Father speaketh the words ; that the Father doeth the works ; and that He and the Father are one. By the Father, therefore, is understood the Divinity in the Lord, inasmuch as the Father was in Him and He in the Father.

The awful error is in dividing the essence of the Almighty, and thus in making three Divine Beings to exist, instead of one. The tri-personal theory is at the bottom of all the false systems in the christian world. Out of this theory have arisen all the perversions of the truth, both from the old and the new Testament. It is the theory of the natural man, and was invented to save him from the necessity of sacrificing his sins. With *this* view, he declares it impossible for God to forgive sins without satisfaction to His Justice ; the Lord Jesus Christ is then made a mere victim to appease God's wrath ; and yet, when the Lord comes in person, He teaches us that there is no wrath in God, and that no victim is therefore necessary, or even possible ! On the contrary, He promises forgiveness on repentance alone, and on no other conditions whatever ; declares that God always forgives, but that the selfish and the malignant, the impious and the unholy, cannot receive his forgiveness ; that He forgives the *penitent* sinner because the sinner has nothing with which to pay, and because any *satisfaction* for sin is, in the nature of the case, morally impossible ! A debt that is *paid* needs no forgiveness ; and the debt *is* forgiven freely because it never *can* be paid : *If Thou, Lord, shouldest be extreme to mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ? But, there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.*

The question before us, therefore, resolves itself into the *Personality* of God. There can be but *one* God ; and if the Lord Jesus Christ is not God, *there is no God !* It is not a question of Three Persons, but it is a question of the very *existence* of Deity ! It is not a speculative question at all ; but practical, and practical to the very utmost. It involves the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He *is* the Deity, because He is the forgiver of sins. He forgives them, in His own name ; and refers you to no one else ! He is the Lord ; and His *name* is Jesus the Saviour. He is the Lord Jesus, and not the Lord *and* Jesus ; "He is not two, but one, Christ." Hence, it is written,

(Isaiah xliii. 11.) *I, even I, am the Lord ; and beside me there is no Saviour.*

This great truth can be realized only by following Him in the Regeneration, or as it is expressed in the parallel passage, *continuing* with Him in His temptations ; becoming His by a new creation—being renewed in the spirit of the mind, and thus delivered from the bondage of Satan. *Thy sins be forgiven thee, arise and walk*, is the language of the Lord to all such as believe in Him, and obey Him. This belief can exist no farther than the obedience is rendered ; for no one can say that *Jesus is the Lord*, but by imbibing His spirit, and seeking to do His will. *To such the Lord manifests Himself as he does not to the world. If any one will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.* To others the doctrine would do no good, because it would not be practical. The perception of the Lord, as one in Person, and as Divine in His Humanity, is clear in proportion to a man's progress in regeneration. As man advances in this great work, in this new Genesis,—as he follows the Lord in obedience to His precepts, He sees the Divinity clearly existing in the person of the blessed Saviour, (Isaiah xxv. 9). This great truth is hidden in mercy from the unholy and the impenitent, lest they should profane it. *He hath hardened their hearts, &c.*, John xii. 37, 40. *Only the pure in heart see God.* Pilate and Herod, in their dark depravity, saw Him only as man. The Pharisees admitted, as Christians generally do now-a-days, that God was with Him in *some way*. The Disciples on the Mount saw His glory (the glory of the Father) shining as the Sun in His strength. John in the Isle of Patmos, under the intense splendour of this glory, fell at His feet as dead. And in Heaven, where they see Him as He is, as the all in all, He is the Lord supreme, the sole object of worship, and His glory fills immensity and eternity.

The idea of God, therefore, depends upon the state of the worshipper. If the Lord Jesus Christ is considered inferior to God, as only secondary in the scheme of salvation, He will be regarded (no matter what is *said* to the contrary) merely as a victim to atone to another Being, and consequently God Himself becomes the "unknown God," and the worship paid to Him will necessarily partake of the false views of the worshipper. Such a person will consider God as arbitrary and severe ; as unforgiving in His nature, and demanding a victim ; while the Saviour will be considered merely as a substitute to appease His wrath. Such a man's religion will be itself full of wrath, from constantly contemplating God in that character ; and

this has accordingly been the Religion of a great part of the Christian world for eighteen centuries! In Europe alone, during that period, there has been more wrong and injustice, more cruelty and oppression, more rapine and bloodshed, than in all the other parts of the world together. Nor has it been confined to their own countries; they have evinced the same spirit in their wanderings all over the earth. If you wish to trace the progress of the *Christian* race on the map of the world, you will trace their footsteps, generally,—*in blood!*

On this principle, therefore, it is easy to see why the Christian Religion has so long remained what it is. Christians have denied the *Author* of their Religion; they have denied His Deity; they have denied that Christ is God; they have denied the Incarnation of the Jehovah, and that the Lord God Almighty has founded His Kingdom in this world! What wonder is it that *such* persons should deny the force of His *precepts*, after they have denied the sole Divinity of Him who declared them? Is it any wonder that Christians, so called, should be sordid and grovelling, sensual and malignant, earthly and selfish, merciless and uncharitable, while they deny the Lord that bought them, and are living in high-treason against His Government? They have denied the *authority* of His Laws; and have even falsified and profaned His "Word," as the Jews profaned His Person. By their "traditions," they have reduced the Lord Himself to the level of a mere man,* and made His Religion subservient to human pride and human ambition.

But the dawn of a brighter day is at hand; nay, it is day; the morning light is already upon the mountains, and the *Sun of Righteousness is rising with healing in His wings. At the brightness of His presence the clouds remove.* He is coming to scatter the darkness of the natural man more and more, *till the light of the moon shall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun shall be seven-fold.* Light from Heaven is flowing into the minds of men by a silent influx, as they are opening their minds to receive it. More is taught to them now than formerly, in spiritual as well as in natural things; and an evidence of this is, that the Bible is now appealed to, more generally than before, as the sole authority in matters of religious belief. Under *this* authority, false systems are disappearing like mists before the sun; and false Teachers are acting under the limitations which the *necessity of the day* imposes upon them. They are no longer able to defend the theory, that one Deity atones to another; or the scheme, which *justifies* the sinner in an instant; or the doctrine that the merit or righteousness of the Deity is imputed

* See Note at the end.

to the sinner, that is, that the attributes of God are imputed to the sinner; for the righteousness of Christ (or the work of Redemption) being Infinite, necessarily involves the Infinite attributes. These doctrines require *three* separate Divine Beings to sustain them; and as there is but *one* Divine Being, these Doctrines are falsifications of the Word of God, and are destined soon to pass for ever away. (Zech. xiv. 9.) These doctrines go upon the supposition that the God of Heaven and Earth is *other* than the Lord Jesus Christ; and where *He* is not acknowledged as the *King* of the Universe, there is no *Christian* Religion. If *He* were so acknowledged, Religion would become a personal concern; and hence the final judgment, whenever spoken of in the Bible, is a question of *personal* righteousness alone, and not depending at all upon the *transfer* of moral actions, or the "imputation" of merit, from any other source.

The practical part of the subject is therefore irresistible, *i. e.*—that in order to be accounted just, or righteous, in the scriptural sense, man must *be* just or righteous. This is the rule of righteous judgment. No one can be admitted into Heaven, but by the Lord; and *His* invitation is to the "righteous,"—*Then shall the Lord say to the righteous*; again, *Then shall he judge between the righteous and the wicked*; and again: *Little children, let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous*. There is no escape from the rigorous scrutiny of God; no creeds, theories, systems, or schemes of man, no doctrine of "imputation," will avail the sinner in that day! God *imputes* nothing to man, but that which appertains to the man himself. Man's works are imputed to him, and if these works are "wrought in God," then they are works of righteousness; and by these works the man will be judged. There is no *merit* in these works, (it is not in *this* sense that they are the works of righteousness,) because *absolute* merit, or righteousness, belongs not to any man or to any angel, but is, in its very nature, Infinite, and belongs to the Lord alone! Hence, *He* is called the *Lord our Righteousness*, or Justice, because *He* is the author of all righteousness in angels or men; and hence all works of righteousness lead to peace and reconciliation with God. *The work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever*. Again,—*Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us, for Thou hast wrought all our works in us.** Salvation, therefore, is not the result of a mere creed, or an "imputative" faith; but it is the unfolding or renewing of the whole spiritual nature of man; and, in

* "That all our doings may be ordered by Thy governance, to do always that is righteous in Thy sight."

this point of view, works save or condemn him, because they indicate his *quality*, or the principle of his will. Christians, so called, talk of a Three-fold Divinity, and of salvation by faith alone, whereas Salvation is of the *life* of faith, because it is the *life* that saves, and nothing else can. They make *faith* the essential, because they can thus live an *earthly and selfish* life, and still have hope of salvation. If love or charity were made the *essential* thing,—love to Christ, and love to others for His sake,—it could *not* be so! Christians would then be the *disciples of Christ*; their life would be a Heavenly life; and they would feel the necessity of being Heavenly in temper, habits, and disposition, in order to live in Heaven.

This Heavenly life, this aptitude for a better world, this capacity to enjoy the purity and intelligence of Angels, is the salvation spoken of in the Holy Scriptures; "it is the life of God in the soul of man." This influent life from Heaven, qualifies a man to live in Heaven; and nothing else can. And this life is the result of a deep sense of God's love to the sinner; of His *forgiving* love, by which the soul learns to love Him in return,—that is, to serve Him with reverence and Godly fear: *there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared*. This forgiveness is absolute on the part of God, and clogged with no other condition than our willingness to receive it. It is not the forgiveness of one Deity, procured at the expense of another Deity; but the direct and personal gift of Deity Himself to the humble and contrite soul. How it enhances the value of this gift to feel that it comes from a God of love; a God who is *known* to us; a God manifested in Person; a God incarnate—our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Oh! why may we not learn to believe in Him, to see in Him the glorious God-Head; and to feel that the love of Christ is the love of God Himself? *God was in Christ, reconciling (atoning) the world unto Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses*. We have thus received the atonement, and are *at one* with God, not because one Deity has paid the debt for us to another; but, because the Deity Himself freely forgives us the debt; and no longer imputes sins, when they are no longer committed. Here you see the love of God to man, the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; you see it in the sufferings He endured for us, sufferings which were but the faint and inadequate manifestation of His Infinite Love! His *Human* sufferings appeal to our senses; but His *Divine Love*, which prompted their necessity, touches the very soul, and fills it with unutterable amazement. You see this love exhibited in the Gospel, as in a picture, and beaming, in glory, from the cradle to the cross. Oh! think of this Love to helpless and hopeless sinners, and be won over to love Him in return. Think of this great fact, the coming of

our Lord into this world to redeem us from sin; to subjugate and remove evils which we could no longer subdue; to deliver us, by assuming human nature for that purpose, from the bondage of evil-spirits, and by His presence in this glorified nature, to redeem us from their spiritual bondage while time itself shall last. Think of the fitness of the plan, the mercy and condescension of the plan, and of the intimate access which, by the Incarnation, is thus opened up to the Divine Being, for His sinful and fallen creatures! Hear Him calling upon us, in the accents of love, and in the tones of forgiveness, to come unto Him for life and salvation. Hear Him affectionately complaining,—*ye will not come unto me that ye might have life*; and declaring, emphatically—*him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out*. He offers pardon for the past, hope for the present, and blessedness and peace throughout the countless ages of eternity. *There is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared.*

NOTE REFERRED TO AT PAGE 25.

Those who declare that the Lord Jesus Christ had a Human Soul, would do well to consider the meaning of the word, and the consequences of such a declaration. If they mean by the word *Soul* exactly what is meant by the Soul of a mere Human Being, and that this Soul was joined to His Divine nature, it would imply the existence of two Souls in one Person, a thing manifestly impossible. Besides, the Human Soul is from the Father, in the order of creation; and the covering or Body is from the Mother: hence every Human Soul is born and conceived in Sin, from mere Human generation; and the idea, therefore, if applied to the Saviour, is both impious and profane! If His Human nature were the nature of a mere man, He would differ not in essence, but only in degree from other men, such as John the Baptist, who was a *man sent from God*, and who was filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb! The Human nature of our Lord partook only of the hereditary evils of the Mother, and therefore, though tempted in all points like men, in order thus to conquer the enemies of man, He was without sin, which could not have been the case, if He had possessed a mere Human Soul, which is conceived and born in Sin. His Soul was the Indwelling Father (Luke i. 35); and being thus Divine, the hereditary evils, assumed from the Mother, were wholly expelled from His Person, in virtue of the Divinity within Him, till the created substance assumed as the son of Mary, became wholly a Divine substance, and she was no longer His Mother; which is, therefore, so represented by His charge to the disciple—(John xix. 26, 27.) There are many sincere persons, no doubt, who speak of the Saviour as having a Human Soul, merely to imply that He possessed, in some way, the Human nature, and as they mean well, their reverential feelings of the Deity of Christ are still retained: but I speak now of persons who ought to know the meaning of words, and the design of the Incarnation! The word *Soul* (*Psyche*) has reference to the external man; and the word *Spirit* (or *pneuma*) to the internal man. Hence the Soul and Spirit are two things. David says, his Soul is disturbed, vexed, persecuted; that is, his life, so called, is troubled; but when he speaks of departing from life, he says—*into Thy hands I commend my Spirit*. And Stephen says, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit. And again, the Spirit returns to God who gave it; the Spirit is the man, disengaged from his body, while the Soul is the external life as it were, not only consisting of the feelings of the body, but of the rational thoughts and perceptions of the external mind. When, therefore, our Lord says, that His Soul is exceeding sorrowful, and that His Soul is troubled, He refers to His external life and sufferings; and hence it is said of Him, that He poured out His Soul unto death! But, when He speaks of His internal Being, which was Jehovah, He speaks of His Spirit being troubled, or His Divine Love being in exercise towards sinners. Hence, His Spirit, or the Divine Love, is called the Father, and after the final passion of the Cross, as the Father then pervaded the whole Human nature,—(Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit)—the Human Body itself became wholly a Divine substance, saw no corruption, and after the resurrection, exercised all the attributes of the Almighty! The nature of this Body transcends all comprehension; but, though it can never be comprehended, it may be adored as the fulness of the God-Head, as the Divine Human Body, in which the Lord dwells, and through which alone He may be approached as the Incarnate (though Infinite and Eternal) God!

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